1:Marshall / E-5 (1952-1953) 1959 FX10 Bushmen FX10
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Approved marriages

No marriages are compulsory in /Kung society. 582

Marriage is allowed with anyone to whom the incest taboo is not extended—with three degrees of approval: preference, permission, and toleration. Once a marriage has taken place, no differentiation in status is made. 602

The joking relationship is the differentiating factor between the preference and mere permission which the society accords. In preferred marriages the man and woman are name relatives who have had the joking relationship before marriage and have applied to each other the terms */gu/na* and *tũn*. This makes the marriage seem altogether right.

Marriage is permitted between name relatives who apply the terms *tsu* and *//ga* to each other and avoided joking before marriage, provided the incest taboo is not specifically extended to them; and, in the same way, marriage is permitted between name relatives who apply to each other the terms */go*, brother, and */kwi*, sister.

Marriage is tolerated, though rarely experienced, as I mentioned before, with persons to whom the name relationship and the application of kin terms is not extended; i.e. persons of other races, persons of other Bushman language groups, or other /Kung outside the region.

To contract a marriage with someone with whom one must not joke brings in a touch of the anomalous which deprives the /Kung of the perfect symmetry and consistency which so content them and make them feel secure in rightness. This society tolerates the anomaly, for obviously it must not forbid marriage in too many categories, and adjusts the joking status by giving to man and wife the joking relationship as soon as marriage takes place. 182 183 582 593 602

Though neither the sororate nor the levirate is compulsory, marriage is highly approved with the wife of a deceased brother or the husband of a sister. A man is expected to take care of his BrWi should she need his care, even though he is not required to marry her. Marriage with a WiSi or HuBr is also highly approved. Ego has had the joking relationship with these affines. 587 768

A marriage arrangement which the /Kung consider especially good is called */oa ku*. This means that an exchange is made between two bands: a boy and girl from one marry a girl and boy from the other. */Oa ku* is not a common practice. Bands as units have no authority in the arrangements of marriages, which is the duty of the parents, as we shall describe presently, and parents do not make the exchange between bands a major factor in their choices. If it happens to come about, however, the people are glad because each band thereby gains a person to replace the person lost and the bonds between the bands are strengthened. 583 619 [584]

Polygynous marriages

Polygyny is the ideal form of marriage among the /Kung. This is not a society in which prestige and wealth concentrate to give certain categories of men more power or right than others to acquire wives. Headmen and medicine men are held in esteem, but their positions do not in themselves entitle them to have extra wives or give them special dispensations. Wealth tends to be fairly well equalized. Everyone carries his or her own artifacts, the men on carrying-sticks over their shoulders, the women 595 554 556 [422] [482]

1:Marshall E-5 (1952-1953) 1959 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

in the pouches of their karosses along with their babies. This puts a strict limit upon any desire to possess great quantities of property in movables. Furthermore, gift-giving keeps all personal property moving in a current through the region and no one possesses very much more than another. The determining factors in obtaining more than one wife are apt to be the personalities of the individuals and the man's ability to hunt. 'Women love meat', we were told, and like their husbands to be good hunters.

The number of wives a man may have is not regulated by social rules but by his ability to obtain and support them. This limits him usually to one. None of the nine polygynists in the band had more than two. However, we heard of a man named Gao, now dead, who had had four wives all at one time. He had been a fabulous hunter and maker of arrows and was the father of the /Ti/kay who is the husband of two sisters, /Naoka and /Nai, in Band 9.

Only two of the nine pairs of co-wives had traceable consanguineous relationship. The above /Ti/kay's wives were sisters—the only ones—and, in Band 10, Old ≠Gao's younger wife, /Ghia, was the BrDa of his older wife, Bau.

/Kwi, sister, is the term which co-wives apply to each other, unless they have the same name, in which case they term each other */gu!na*. The /Kung, though they do not institutionalize the sororate, say it is a good idea to marry sisters because they are not so likely to be jealous of each other as other women. /Ti/kay's wives, who appeared to live in harmony and affection and to support each other, provided an example of the validity of this opinion.

Marriage to the same man gives co-wives the joking relationship, and they do not observe the sitting or the name avoidance, though they may have avoided each other before marriage.

/Kung co-wives share one scherm and one family fire. The scherm, the little shelter of branches and grass which the women build, a half hemisphere in shape, is only 3 to 4 ft. wide on the open side, about 3 ft. deep at the centre, perhaps 4 to 5 ft. high at the peak. In it and in front of it, beside their one fire, the two wives live, share their man, share the food they gather, share the work of fetching water and wood, nurse each other's babies, and co-operate in whatever degree of harmony their spirits can attain.

Husbands and wives may sleep separately or lie close together, side by side, or feet to feet. The woman holds her infant in her arms. Young children sleep near by bundled together, two or three in one kaross. Girls at about seven or eight go to sleep with a grandmother or a widowed friend or relative. The boys of the band, beginning at the same age, all sleep at a boys' fire.

/Ti/kay (Band 9), husband of the two attractive sisters, sees to it that his wives lie close to him, especially on cold nights, one on each side. Sleeping thus they were like the three stars of Orion which we call the Belt, but which the /Kung say are three zebras, two females with a male between them.

It is under such conditions that the /Kung usually have sexual intercourse—at night, in their sleeping place. They cover themselves with their karosses and are very discreet. The position is to lie on the side, the man at the back of the woman. Men pull the labia of the women before intercourse. The wives of /Ti/kay told me that they took pleasure in intercourse. I asked them if they had orgasms. We had

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755 from ostrich egg shells, had been put on by her proxy, Dube, a
756 very intelligent young woman. The latter, standing at the end of
796 the semicircle of seated women, conducted the ceremony. She
[276] was in a very good mood and alternately smoked her Bushman
[554] pipe and my cigarettes. There is a kind of hierarchy among the
women; those who were squatting were higher in rank than those
who were standing. All the women clapped their hands and sang
[533] in a monotonous rhythm: ehe, ehe, ehe, ehe, etc. This, I was
assured, was no song, but "music." Some hordes have bartered

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Fig. 19. Sorcerer in a Bird Mask, Followed by Spirits of Sickness. (From Rock Paintings in South Africa. From Parts of the Eastern Province and Orange Free State. Copied by G. W. Stow. With an introduction and descriptive notes by Dorothea Bleek. London, Methuen, 1930.)

dance drums one and a half meters high from the Okawango, which on this occasion are played by men. [Fig. 19 appears
[184] here.] Among the Bushmen of the Sand Veld the female leader of the ceremony does not wear the ornaments of the chief female doctor; instead, the ornaments are hung on a tree. The position of the chief female doctor is not permanently held by one person; the chief doctor on occasion imparts supernatural powers to her.

755 The five doctors had taken off all their ornaments and
756 were naked except for the front apron. They put themselves
786 into an autohypnotic state by means of crowing, by producing
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9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
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We had met him for the first time at Gautscha. He had come in from the veld one night to visit his brother, and we had met him in the morning. Short Kwi was a young, small man, shorter than his wife and so slender that he looked almost like a child. With long, light feet that took him everywhere, with heavy thighs but light calves like the thin shanks of a greyhound, and with a narrow, deep chest and lungs that never winded, he was obviously built for hunting. In the rainy season when the veld was soft and muddy he often hunted with only a spear and ran the great antelopes down, for though their hooves sunk and split in the mud, causing them eventually to tire, Short Kwi never tired and his strong legs bore him after them relentlessly, sweeping him down the long plains like a wind of death.

His life in the veld seemed lonely, but I doubt that it was; he had his wife, who adored him, for company in the evenings, and although she may have missed companionship more than he did, they were both shy, both quiet, and it may be that they both enjoyed their life apart. Short Kwi hunted most of the time. He would hunt on and on and when word would reach the large band of his wife's family that he had killed, the band would go out to where the animal was, dry the meat, and eat it. When there was enough meat Short Kwi would rest, would relax in the sun, would talk with his wife or make himself a new skin bag or garment, and when word would reach him that all the meat was gone he would move again. The men of his wife's family hunted too, of course, but never as successfully as he, yet his great ability set him so far apart from ordinary mortals that for once the Bushmen forgot their jealousy and agreed that he was the best hunter the Kalahari had ever known.

It is a custom among Bushman hunters to cut strips of skin

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The headman of each band is considered to "own" a waterhole. What he is considered to "own," is both the water and the *veldkos* of the district. The ground itself is described as *chi dole*, worthless. Headmanship is hereditary, the headman being the oldest son of the previous headman although, if the male line is cut off for a generation, headmanship is passed through the eldest daughter to her eldest son. But head-

[p. 72]

11:Marshall E-5 (1950-1955) 1958
FX10 Bushmen FX10
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manship is different from leadership, which is not hereditary. Leadership depends heavily on a man's character, his hunting prowess, and especially his ability to focus people's opinions. Usually headman and leader are the same person but, should a headman be too young—perhaps still in his mother's womb—or very old, a band will have a separate leader.

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Theoretically, the right to refuse water to members of another band

11:Marshall I-5 (1950-1955) 1958
FX10 Bushmen FX10
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belongs to the headman, although we never saw this done nor did we ever hear of such a thing. Neither leadership nor headmanship implies any overt coercive power over the other members of a band. Only as a sort of coagulation of group opinion can headman or leaders exert a control —which, even then, is not final. The leader, being the kind of person to whom others come when decisions must be made, is often an arbiter, in

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quarrels, a focal point in discussion of plans, a comfort to the bereaved and a strength for those in doubt.

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The functions of headman, as headman, are of a different nature. In order to take up residence with a band, a person must have certain ties of kin with members of the band. Such a person may live with his own parents or siblings, or with his wife's parents or siblings. It is a wide choice, providing for flexibility—but within limits. There are, of course, exceptions, and visitors from other bands are never denied, but possession of some kinship tie seems to be a general requirement for residence which,

622 areas, baobab trees, and—most important—*mangetti* trees that hold
423 water in their trunks, and *tsi* areas. It is these "owned" features, and the direction from the waterhole in which they lie, that define a territory. Since, as we have seen, *mangetti*'s and *tsi* are the most important !Kung resources, they are the main determinants of a direction.

But animals are *not* owned. Neatly bounded sections of the countryside are *not* owned. A territory, therefore can best be defined as the combination of a permanent waterhole and a direction: the !Kung so define it by the word "side." One headman's territory is said to be on this "side."

361 JUST as the Kalahari's scant re-
621 sources of food and water are distributed in accordance with a geo-
622 graphical pattern, the !Kung bands are distributed in accordance with both a geographical and a social pattern. Natural resources are the focal points in the geographical pattern of band distribution: headmen are the focal points in the social pattern. In a sense, headmen tie together the two patterns, the concept of headmanship being the embodiment of a certain quantity of resources in a person around whom a band can take shape and operate. Because of their kin ties with a headman, the people living round him, clustering their *skerms* around his and moving with him over his territory, feel right in being where they are.

622 The headman receives no special privileges. He is no more wealthy
554 than other men. If he is a leader, he may assume responsibility and speak out. But, as headman, he need not speak, for headmanship is a silent office and while the headman lives—by his waterhole or out somewhere on his territory with his band—he serves his whole purpose.

423 Most of the permanent waterholes have two !Kung bands associated
312 with them, and the *tsi* areas are likewise shared by bands from the same and different waterholes. Such sharing may come about because two brothers (only one of whom may be the true headman) live together and feel they possess joint claims. It may come about through the passage of time, which confuses genealogies and lets claims, once tenuous, become firm through usage. The !Kung are a people of present tense, living—in their minds as well as with their

15: Marshall E-5 (1951-1961) 1965
FX10 Bushmen FX10
!Kung

various taboos. They wait for the children to grow up, hoping that they will be like their families in these qualities. 581

The marriage takes place when the parents agree, but it must be after the boy has killed a game animal and is scarified. The age at which young people marry varies greatly. We know girls who were married for five or six years before they menstruated; others were somewhat older at marriage. 582

!Kung society rigorously, and without exception, requires that all men, in first and subsequent marriages, go to live with the parents of their brides, and give them bride service. This service is essentially hunting. "Our daughter's husband must give us meat." "We shall soon be old; we need a young man to hunt for us." These are the refrains of the people. 591 593

The duration of bride service is indefinite. The !Kung say it should be long enough for three children to be born. Since the girls are so young, it may mean that eight or ten years elapse before three children have been born. Divorce may terminate bride service. After his obligations are fulfilled, a man has the right to return to his own people with his wife and dependents or he may choose to stay with his wife's people.

The young couple is expected not to have sexual intercourse until the girl is ready. No social rule patterns the time, which is a matter of individual adjustment, but the boy must not force the girl. If she complained to her parents, they might disapprove of the boy, dissolve the marriage, and send him away. His parents would have to try to find another bride for him and he would have to wait for years again for her to grow up. 585 [586]

The !Kung are polygynous. First marriages are ordinarily arranged by their parents between children who have not been previously married. Only occasionally is a young girl betrothed for her first marriage to a man who had been married before, perhaps a young man who had lost his wife by death or divorce, or possibly, but rarely, to her sister's husband or some other man as his second wife. Usually second marriages are contracted later in life when a woman becomes available for remarriage through widowhood or divorce. In such marriages, the man and woman concerned make their own arrangements. The number of wives a man may have is determined not by social rule but by the man's ability to obtain and support them. This limits him usually to one. There is no great excess of women, and prestige and wealth do not concentrate in !Kung society to give certain categories of men, such as headmen or medicine men, more power or right than others to acquire wives. A sampling of eighty-eight marriages showed that only nine of the men had two wives. None had more than two. 595 587 595 [554]

Although the first wife is considered to have a somewhat more esteemed and dominant position, no property or other material advantage is given to her and no important social advantage accrues.

!Kung co-wives live very closely together. They share one scherm and one family fire. They care for and nurse each other's children. Even when

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date)1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10

595 is the rule, but a second wife is not considered wrong; it is thought better for a man in such a case to marry the younger sister of his first wife, then the two will not quarrel.[1] Further east in this tribe three or four wives are not infrequent, and actually a man often marries the sisters and "cousins" of his first wife.[2] The Auen at Rietfontein all have only one wife, "because of the scarcity of food," while those at Gam on the average have two, and sometimes even five wives. The wife first married holds a higher social position than the rest, which may, however, says Kaufmann, be due merely to her greater age.[3] Among the Kung a second wife may be taken, if the first consents; but owing to the difficulty of providing for more than one wife, adds Lebzelter, polygynous marriages are extremely rare.[4] Of the Heikum, again, Fourie tells us that each man as a rule has two wives, who may or may not be related. The second wife is married some time after the first, who is looked upon as the principal wife and exercises a certain amount of authority over her. Each wife has a hut of her own. The husband lives with the principal wife, and visits the second only for purposes of cohabitation.[5] Polygynous marriages are also found among the !O Kung of Angola and among the Hiechware, but are here said to be comparatively rare.[6]

The occurrence of such marriages implies a numerical
[114] preponderance of women, or else that some of the men must remain
[162] bachelors; but unfortunately in no instance are figures given to show the proportion of men and women, or even of monogamous and polygynous marriages, within the band. The motives for polygyny are also not clearly defined. We are told, however, that
[622] chiefs among the Naron mostly had two wives,[7] so that here it may be
[554] partly associated with rank; while among the Auen, and probably also among the Heikum, the second wife is often not taken until the first is old and past child-bearing. A similar statement is made by Barrow about the Cape Bushmen.[8] In such cases naturally only the older men have more than one wife.

582 The Cape and the Namib Bushmen, as previously mentioned, are said to forbid marriage only between own brother and sister, parent and child; and so do the !O Kung of Angola. Beyond this no special prohibition or injunction appears to exist. Among the Heikum, on the other hand, the range of forbidden relatives is extended to include all cousins and nieces; while in all the North-Western tribes, including

[1] D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 34. [2] Passarge, op. cit., 106. [3] Op. cit., 137. [4] Op. cit., 13–14.
[5] Op. cit., 92. [6] D. F. Bleek, "Bushmen of Central Angola," 112; Dornan, op. cit., 124.
[7] D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 37. [8] Loc. cit.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date) 1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10

daughters are competely excluded from the inheritance. The eldest son also becomes the head of the family after the death of his father, and must care for the widow and give her food.[1]

Regulation of Public Life

In spite of the loose cohesion of the band, and the facility with which the family groups composing it may wander about separately, the Bushmen are by no means devoid of government and law. Where they are subject to the Bantu or other peoples there is of course not much possibility of an independent political life. In the Okavango marshes, for example, they are in the position of serfs to the BaTawana, by whom they are required to pay an annual tribute of skins, ostrich feathers, and egg-shell beads. The territory occupied by the BaTawana is divided into local districts, each under control of a minor chief (*kxosani*), to whom all the Bushmen in the district have to pay their tribute, and for whom they often have to perform such services as herding his cattle and hunting for him. In the Oschimpoloveld again the Bushmen pay tribute to the OvaKwangari; in the Southern Kalahari they are the serfs and herdsmen of the BaTlaro and other BeChwana tribes among whom they live, and so, too, in the North-East Kalahari, where they are subject to the BaMangwato.[2]

But where the Bushmen are still to some extent independent, each band, as we have seen, is a separate political unit and regulates its own affairs. There is no well-developed system of organized government. In the small family groups of the Cape and Namib Bushmen and of the !O Kung deference is paid to the head of the group, but his authority in general is very limited. The common affairs of the

[1] D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 10, 35; Kaufmann, op. cit., 159; Seydel, op. cit., 504; Trenk, "Buschleute der Namib," 169.

[2] Passarge, *Die Buschmänner*, 121–2; Dornan, *Pygmies and Bushmen*, 65–6; Seiner, "Bereisung der Omaheke," 296 sqq.; D. F. Bleek, "Bushman Languages," 56. In August, 1926, the High Commissioner for S. Africa (H.E. the Earl of Athlone), addressing an assembly of BaMangwato at their chief town Serowe, made the following important declaration with reference to this servitude: "It has been stated that the Masarwa are the slaves of the Mangwato. The Government does not regard them as slaves, but realizes that they are a backward people who serve the Mangwato in return for the food and shelter they receive. I understand that for the most part they are contented and that they do not wish to change. But the Government will not allow any tribe to demand compulsory service from another, and wants to encourage the Masarwa to support themselves. Any Masarwa who wish to leave their masters and live independently of them should understand that they are at liberty to do so, and that if the Mangwato attempt to retain them against their will the Government will not allow it. It is the duty of the Chiefs and Headmen to help these people to stand on their own feet, and I expect the missionaries and the Chief and his Councillors to join the Government in preventing anything in the nature of compulsory service in Bechuanaland" (*Report on Bechuanaland Protectorate*, 1926–7, Colonial Reports No. 1379, p. 6). What effect this pronouncement has had upon the status of the Bushmen it is still too early to determine.

2: Schapera E-4, 5 (no date)1930
FX13 Hottentot
Bushmen FX10

534 887 band, such as migrations and hunting parties, appear rather to be regulated by the skilled hunters and the older, more experienced men generally.[1]

622 [184] [192] Among the North-Western tribes, on the other hand, where the bands are on the whole more considerable in size, each band has a recognized chief (*//exa* or *//exaba*, *gao-aob* or *gei-khoib*; the last two words are of Hottentot origin).[2] The office is as a rule hereditary in the male line, descending from father to son, or, failing such, to the nearest male relative. The heir succeeds only when he attains maturity, i.e. when he has passed through the puberty ceremonies and has killed his first head of big game. During his minority there is no regency—things just go on, as Kaufmann says. Among the Heikum and the Kung, however, the eldest sister's eldest son succeeds. This [184] [171] rule of succession is so much at variance with what we know of the other North-Western Bushmen, and even of the structure of the band in the two tribes mentioned, that, if the information be correct, the practice can only be regarded as due to the influence of the neighbouring OvaMbo, who are definitely organized on a matrilineal [611] basis. There is no other instance of matrilineal succession among the Bushmen.

No tribute or services are rendered to the chief, nor are there any special signs of chieftainship, such as a particular dress or mode of [595] life. We are told by Miss Bleek that Naron chiefs mostly have two wives, but whether this is in any way associated with their status is not made clear. The main functions of the chief apparently are to direct the movements of the people from place to place and to allocate the work for the day, to order the burning of the veld, and, in particular, to lead in war. Among the Heikum we also know that in him are vested certain other functions the performance of which is of vital importance to the welfare of the community. He alone, as we have seen, "is able to bring forth from fire the magic properties which bring health and happiness and ward off evil and misfortune." The various beliefs and practices centring in the first fire kindled by him at every new encampment, while fully demonstrating the importance of this fire in the social life of the people, at the same time also reflect his religious significance and emphasize the dependence of the community upon him in this aspect of their life. He also, as we have

[1] D. F. Bleek, *The Mantis*, p. viii; *idem*, "Bushmen of Central Angola," 109; Trenk, op. cit., 170; Seydel, op. cit., 504.
[2] Kaufmann, "Die Auin," 154; D. F. Bleek, *Naron*, 36–7; Fourie, "Bushmen of S.W.A.," 86–8; Lebzelter, "Bei den !Kun-Buschleuten," 14.